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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT NUMBER 03-2008

From the Commissioner

Roderick J. Fraser, Jr.

This is the time of year when the budget battles are waged both here in the city and at the State House. At the city level, we were able to get most of the things we wanted funded to include new apparatus as well as new thermal imaging cameras. We did not receive any cuts in any of our budget lines and will be able to continue providing the current level of service to the community.

At the state level, we are once again working to get the \$500,000 in funding for the Boston Fire Department's HAZMAT Teams to support training and response, as well as the \$1.75 million for Training that we received in the last state budget. The \$1.75 million and \$500k are "off budget" funds that come from an account that is funded through fire insurance premium underwriting. This money helped pay for the Officer Training programs that were developed, training for Fire Alarm Operators and Fire Protection Inspectors, training for the Dive Team and the purchase of training related equipment.

The Mayor's Independent Review Panel Report (Shannon Report) that was issued in December recommended the creation of three Civilian Deputy Commissioners. The three Deputy Commissioners will be a Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance, a Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Organizational Development and a Deputy Commissioner for Labor Relations and Legal Advisor to the Department.

These three positions have been created and funded and I have been interviewing applicants. We are working on the final reorganization to include these positions. The Strategic Planning Committee was instrumental in developing the job descriptions as well as developing the new Departmental organizational structure. I hope to announce this reorganization as well as my selections for the Deputy Commissioner positions soon.



Trench/Rescue Team Tours Tunnel

There is a new tunnel being dug in Boston that no one will ever drive in. Starting by Castle Island in South Boston, the 19 foot in diameter tunnel will carry the overflow from the Deer Island treatment plant. Each day, 15-20 workers descend about 75 feet to go to work digging this 2-mile-plus long tunnel below South Boston.

Boston firefighters who would respond to incidents at this construction site have taken a familiarization and safety tour of the tunnel. In addition to the firefighters stationed in South Boston, specialized teams of Trench/Rescue trained firefighters have had briefings about the project from the contractors.



From the Chief of Department

Kevin P. MacCurtain

Our first general session of Company Officer and Chief Officer training took place the week of January 28th. I would like to thank Deputy Chief David Mager, District Chief Mark Buchanan and Captain Rick Connolly, who worked together with Training Division Deputy Chief Dave Granara in an untiring effort to develop a high quality program.

The guest speakers for the program were Bob Haulton, Editor of Fire Engineering and formally of FDNY and Jim Smith, retired Deputy Chief of the Philadelphia Fire Department and author of Tactics and Strategy. These highly respected national speakers both said repeatedly that the Boston Fire Department ranks as one of the top four Fire Departments in the country.

In seminars, lectures and conferences that they attend across the country, the question Firefighters ask them repeatedly is "...what is Boston doing." We are considered by our peers as a department that is ahead of the curve. A department whose fireground operations stand out as exceptional. This recognition and acknowledgement by our peers is why we have every reason to hold our heads high and be proud of whom we are.

We must never lose that edge on the fireground. The teamwork and tactics that we have developed over the years is what keeps each of us safe as we perform a very dangerous job.

After each fire we must continue to ask ourselves what went right, and what we can improve on. For it is thru this type of lessons learned critique, in the kitchen, after the fire that keeps us on top of our game.

Stay Safe Thru Training



Firehouse Maintenance Projects

Maintenance has completed a number of projects designed to improve the quality of life in our firehouses. We are prioritizing now the projects that we will begin in July at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Some of the projects completed this past year include:

- New kitchen for E33 (\$24,147)
- E18 new stainless steel kitchen cabinets (\$19,771)
- E33 replace kitchen floor and tiles (\$4,827)
- Repair or replace 7 hot water heaters (\$18,800)
- Overhead door repairs and replacement (\$46,000)
- Repair and replaced broken or leaking steam and water pipes (\$20,185)
- Plymo-Vents repair and maintain (\$34,000)
- Roof and floor drains (\$19,962)
- Replace various cabinets (\$7,481)
- Install floor at FAO for computers (\$2,831)
- Fences and gates E17 & Hose Shop (\$9,221)
- Painting (\$18,610)
- Asbestos encapsulating HQ (\$4,200)
- Stairs and ramps (\$10,124)
- Demo and reconstruction weight room E18, new door and shelving (\$9,984)
- E30 air compressor (\$3,180) Laundry vents (\$1,945)
- E2 roof (\$1,404)
- E10 sump pump \$1,774)
- Locker doors at E10 (\$2,358)
- Replace 2 ceiling heaters @ arson (\$4,395)
- E41 replace emergency compressor & tank (\$9,700)
- Replace E17 valve and condensate pump (\$9,987)
- Replace boiler and Pump at Academy (\$4,486)
- E8 replace corroded steam pipes (\$3,504)
- E14 re-pipe re-circulating lines (\$3,796)

Apparatus Replacement: On December 31st, we took delivery of two E-One Ladder Trucks which were assigned to Ladder 2 and Ladder 9. The cost of these trucks was \$674,031 per unit, for a total cost of \$1,348,062.

E-One was also the winning bidder for six (6) new pieces of apparatus that are on order and scheduled to be delivered this summer, 3 new Fire engines and 3 new Ladder trucks. The combined cost of these 6 pieces of apparatus is slightly more than \$3 million. I am currently working with the City and E-One to try and move up delivery of some of these pieces to this Fiscal year.

The company assignments for these pieces have not been determined and we are looking at reassignment of some of the Pierce Ladder units.



For the FY 10 budget, I am requesting funding for 3 new engine, 2 new ladders and 1 new Rescue which would cost approximately \$3.2 million. The capital budget has not been finalized by the City, but when it is, I will let you know the final purchase plan for FY10.

Leary Fire Fighters Foundation Donates new W-25: The Leary Foundation has donated a new Fireground Rehabilitation Unit (W-25) to be delivered in May of this year. The cost of this vehicle is approximately \$205,000.00 delivered. The new W-25 will be a 2008 Chevrolet C5500, 19,000 #GVWR custom built Marque, Inc. and supplied by Specialty Vehicles, Inc. This new vehicle was requested by the BFD Emergency Medical Division and will be a great improvement in Fire Fighter safety. Once again, the Leary foundation has shown its commitment to the Boston Fire Department.

Dunkin Donuts and the Leary Foundation donate a new Flashover Trainer for the Fire Academy:

Dunkin Donuts has, through the Leary Fire Fighters Foundation, donated a new Flashover Trainer for the Fire Academy. This Trainer will be located next to the new Tactical Burn Building. The Flashover Trainer is the Model GB Flashover Simulator from Flashover Systems Inc. 2198 Council Ring Road, Mississauga, ON, Canada. This is the same Flashover Simulator that the Leary Foundation donated to the FDNY and after consultation with the leadership we believe that this trainer is the best option. I requested that the Flashover Trainer be delivered to the BFD Training Academy on Moon Island in May 2008 and will be available for the next class. We will be sending some of our instructors to the FDNY Randall's Island facility to train with their instructors and gain some hands on experience operating this before we put it in service.



Mayor Menino's letter to the House Committee on Ways and Means: Mayor Menino is fighting to ensure that the training dollars provided to the Boston Fire Department in last year's State budget are included in the FY09 budget as well. Mayor Menino's letter to Chairman Robert DeLeo reads in part *"While policing efforts have received much attention as violence continues in our cities, it is equally important to ensure that our firefighters are also able to meet the daily demands of their job. To this end, I ask that you also support two items dedicated to additional training and equipment. Last year's budget increased the amount assessed to fire insurance companies by \$1.75M and dedicated the funds to the Boston Fire Training Academy (line item 8324-0000). Because the Massachusetts Fire Training Academy in Stow has a significant waiting list, the Boston academy often trains firefighters from the Metro Boston region at no cost to their city or them. I would appreciate your support for this item in the interest of expanding our training staff to help alleviate some of the pressure on the state's firefighting academy. That same line item provided \$500,00 for the Boston Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Response Teams, and I ask that you support this dedicated funding stream for some of our most important first responders."*

Advanced Training for the BFD Dive Team: I recently approved a request from the dive master to send the dive team to a course on "Underwater Crime Scene Preservation and Body Recovery Specialist" for dive operations. In the past, the dive team has been limited by various law enforcement organizations because they deem certain situations to be "possible crime scenes". This 5 day course will train our divers how to properly approach a body in the water and what steps to take to protect evidence. Additionally, this will address advanced body recovery techniques. With this training, our dive team will be able to respond properly to more situations and can preserve evidence at a potential crime scene which will allow us to work more closely with the Police.

Reduced Fitness Center Membership to South End Fitness Center: The Boston Public Health Commission has agreed to allow Boston Fire Department members to join the South End Fitness Center, located at 35 Northampton St, at the BPHC price of \$150.00 per year. The normal price is \$360.00. This is a great deal to be able to use this facility. Check it out online at www.southendfitness.org. SEFC provides access to a variety of fitness options including weight training and state-of-the-art cardiovascular equipment, basketball court, swimming pool, exercise studio and an array of group fitness classes, including personal training. All you will need to join is your BFD ID card.

New Burn Building nears Completion: The new Tactical Training Facility (Burn Building) at Moon Island is nearing construction. If you get a chance, drive down and take a look. This will be a big plus for our training program.



ALL ABOUT THE HOMESTEAD ACT

Homestead Act protection is protection of your primary residence from attachment or levy on execution or sale to satisfy debts to the extent of \$500,000 per residence, per family. In other words, if you file the necessary paperwork with the Registry of Deeds for the county where your home is, your home as your primary residence cannot be attached or sold to pay a court judgment and your home is protected up to \$500,000 of the value of the property.

The Declaration of Homestead protects your family, as well. Should the parent who declares the Homestead die, the law protects the residence until the youngest child reaches 18 years of age and until the surviving spouse dies or remarries. Please note that if you are over 62 years of age, there is a different form that you use.

This form of protection will not save your home from attachment or sale when it comes to federal or state tax liens, mortgages, judgments from Probate Court to enforce orders to pay support of a spouse or minor child, executions issued from a court where the judgment is based upon fraud or debts contracted prior to the acquisition of the homestead.

But it will protect your home should someone file suit against you and get an award that is greater than any insurance coverage or when there is no insurance coverage. For instance, if you were involved in an auto accident that was unfortunately your fault and the jury awarded the person suing you more than the auto insurance you have on your car or truck, the attorney for the injured person could seek the sale of your home to satisfy the debt. By filing the declaration of homestead with the Registry of Deeds, your property is protected up to \$500,000.

This is not a substitute for homeowner's insurance or other types of insurance. This protection is effective after the liability insurance has been paid to its limits.

How do you do it? The easiest way is to go online and locate the Registry of Deeds website for the county where your home is located. The site for Suffolk County, for instance, is www.suffolkdeeds.com. Print up the form entitled Declaration of Homestead Application, fill in the info, send along a check for \$35.00 made payable to the Registry of Deeds and you will be all set for any judgments or awards that happen after the date of the filing. If you have no access to a computer, just give the Registry of Deeds of your county a call and ask for a copy of the application.

Hope this helps give you and your family some added protection.

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Ten Promoted at a Headquarters Ceremony

A promotion ceremony was held on April 8, 2008 at fire headquarters.

Commissioner Roderick J. Fraser, Jr. promoted to District Fire Chief Joseph Niemann from Engine 41; to Captains David Harrison from Engine 37; Steven Shaffer from Ladder 26 and Christopher Burke from Tower Ladder 17.

Promoted to Lieutenants joining the officer ranks were Glen Campbell from Ladder 26; Stephen Avellino from Engine 50; Jeremiah McCarthy from Ladder 1; Daniel Dowling from Engine 14; Santos Ortiz from Engine 16 and Daniel McCarthy from Engine 49.

Congratulations to all.

